

McIntyre
10/668,953

RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER
DEC 13 2006

In the Claims

1. (currently amended) An end cap for the exposed ends of the pins and rods of an external fixator device, in combination comprising:

a) a fixator device for forming an exoskeletal brace for use on a limb of a patient, said fixator device having at least one connecting rod, a plurality of spaced connecting clamps on said connecting rod, and a plurality of fixation pins extending through each of said connecting clamps, said fixation pins having free ends away from said connecting clamps, said connecting rod having first and second opposing ends;

b) a separate end cap releasably positioned on said free ends of fixation pins for each connecting clamp leaving a space between end caps;

c) wherein each said end cap is oval shaped and made of a compressible material and having first and second opposing conically shaped ends and a first and second opposing side surface, said first side surface being generally disposed away from said fixation pins and said second side surface being generally disposed toward said fixation pins, said second side surface having a cavity therein, and each of said first and second opposing ends terminating in a planar surface at right angles to a central axis of said end cap; and,

d) pliable material filling said cavity, wherein said ends of said fixation pins are press fitted into said pliable material to permit the free ends of the fixation pins to be covered, whereby each said end cap before mounting on said free ends of said fixation pins is a solid compressible member containing a filling of pliable material ready for press fitting onto said fixation pins.

2-5. (canceled)

McIntyre
10/668,953

6. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 1 ~~[[5]]~~, wherein said cavity is rectangular shaped and extends from a first point adjacent said first end of said end cap to a second point adjacent said second end of said end cap.

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 6 ~~[[7]]~~, wherein said end cap comprises soft material.

9-11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 8 ~~[[9]]~~, wherein said end cap is manufactured in a plurality of sizes to permit use with various sizes of the fixation device.

13. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 12, further comprising a bubble pack ~~for containing said end caps of various sizes~~ ready for direct use.

14-15. (canceled)